AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1 - 5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A game program for~~ A computer-readable medium storing instructions for configuring a processor to perform a method for performing a relay race game ~~causing a computer to function as a game device,~~ in which a plurality of players input operation signals via respective operation means, [[a]] the relay race game ~~is executed~~ being performed within a game space by player characters which are operated based on the operation signals, and in which game images of the relay race game corresponding to each player are created and outputted as a game screen to display means corresponding to each player, wherein said method ~~game program includes~~ comprises:

a game setting process of, based on operation signals from the players, reading out from a recording medium data for player characters based on selection by the players, and acquiring information about division of the players into teams for said relay race game, and about [[the]] an order of play within each team;

a game execution process of executing a start of said relay race game between the teams based on said team division information and the order-of-play information, and, based on the order-of-play information, performing a process of taking a player

character of each team set as a current runner among said player characters, as a current runner character, to be moved within the game space;

a display process of, based on the order-of-play information, moving the player character of each team which is set as the current runner among the player characters within said game space as the current runner character, and displaying the situation of movement as a game screen on game screen display means of the players;

a decision process of acquiring position coordinates of said current runner character within the game space, taking a predetermined operation change over position as a reference point, and deciding whether or not said current runner character is positioned within a predetermined distance range from the reference point;

a notification process of, when decided that said current runner character is positioned within the predetermined distance range from the operation change over position, providing a display which notifies a change over of operation of said current runner character on the game screen of the player who operates [[the]] a next runner character which is set as [[the]] a next runner among the player characters based on the order-of-play information; ~~and~~

an operation change over process of, when said current runner character arrives at the operation change over position, along with displaying said next runner character at the position of said current runner character, also inhibiting operation signals from the operator of said current runner character, and making effective an operation signal from the operator of the next runner character;

a change over timing calculation process of, in said notification process, calculating timing at which operation change over is performed, based on the distance between said current runner character and said reference point; and

a change over timing display process of providing a display which shows timing of operation change over on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character, based on the change over timing information calculated by the change over timing calculation process.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~game program~~ computer-readable medium according to Claim 6 [[7]], the method further comprising:

a process of, in said notification process, displaying said next runner character translucently overlapped on said current runner character which is being displayed on said game screen of the operator of said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by said change over timing calculation process, changing the transparency of the display of said current runner character and of said next runner character as the time for change over approaches, and, at the time point when the time for change over has arrived, displaying said next runner character normally along with canceling the display of said current runner character.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~game program~~ computer-readable medium according to Claim 6 [[7]], the method further comprising:

a process of, in said notification process, deforming said current runner character which is being displayed on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character into said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by the change over timing calculation process, performing display so as to deform said current runner character into said next runner character as the time for change over approaches.

10. (New) A computer device programmed according to a game program to execute a relay race game in which a plurality of players input operation signals via respective operation means, the relay race game being executed within a game space by player characters which are operated based on the operation signals, and in which game images of the relay race game corresponding to each player are created and outputted as a game screen to display means corresponding to each player, said game program causing the computer device to perform:

a game setting process of, based on operation signals from the players, reading out from a recording medium data for player characters based on selection by the players, and acquiring information about division of the players into teams for said relay race game, and about an order of play within each team;

a game execution process of executing a start of said relay race game between the teams based on said team division information and the order-of-play information, and, based on the order-of-play information, performing a process of taking a player character of each team set as a current runner among said player characters, as a current runner character, to be moved within the game space;

a display process of, based on the order-of-play information, moving the player character of each team which is set as the current runner among the player characters within said game space as the current runner character, and displaying the situation of movement as a game screen on game screen display means of the players;

a decision process of acquiring position coordinates of said current runner character within the game space, taking a predetermined operation change over position as a reference point, and deciding whether or not said current runner character is positioned within a predetermined distance range from the reference point;

a notification process of, when decided that said current runner character is positioned within the predetermined distance range from the operation change over position, providing a display which notifies a change over of operation of said current runner character on the game screen of the player who operates a next runner character which is set as a next runner among the player characters based on the order-of-play information;

an operation change over process of, when said current runner character arrives at the operation change over position, along with displaying said next runner character at the position of said current runner character, also inhibiting operation signals from the

operator of said current runner character, and making effective an operation signal from the operator of the next runner character;

a change over timing calculation process of, in said notification process, calculating timing at which operation change over is performed, based on the distance between said current runner character and said reference point; and

a change over timing display process of providing a display which shows timing of operation change over on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character, based on the change over timing information calculated by the change over timing calculation process.

11. (New) The computer device according to Claim 10, the game program causing the computer device to further perform:

a process of, in said notification process, displaying said next runner character translucently overlapped on said current runner character which is being displayed on said game screen of the operator of said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by said change over timing calculation process, changing the transparency of the display of said current runner character and of said next runner character as the time for change over approaches, and, at the time point when the time for change over has arrived, displaying said next runner character normally along with canceling the display of said current runner character.

12. (New) The computer device according to Claim 10, the game program causing the computer device to further perform:

a process of, in said notification process, deforming said current runner character which is being displayed on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character into said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by the change over timing calculation process, performing display so as to deform said current runner character into said next runner character as the time for change over approaches.

13. (New) A method, implemented by a processor, for performing a relay race game in which a plurality of players input operation signals via respective operation means, the relay race game being executed within a game space by player characters which are operated based on the operation signals, and in which game images of the relay race game corresponding to each player are created and outputted as a game screen to display means corresponding to each player, wherein said method comprises:

a game setting process, by the processor, of, based on operation signals from the players, reading out from a recording medium data for player characters based on selection by the players, and acquiring information about division of the players into teams for said relay race game, and about an order of play within each team;

a game execution process of executing a start of said relay race game between the teams based on said team division information and the order-of-play information,

and, based on the order-of-play information, performing a process of taking a player character of each team set as a current runner among said player characters, as a current runner character, to be moved within the game space;

a display process of, based on the order-of-play information, moving the player character of each team which is set as the current runner among the player characters within said game space as the current runner character, and displaying the situation of movement as a game screen on game screen display means of the players;

a decision process of acquiring position coordinates of said current runner character within the game space, taking a predetermined operation change over position as a reference point, and deciding whether or not said current runner character is positioned within a predetermined distance range from the reference point;

a notification process of, when decided that said current runner character is positioned within the predetermined distance range from the operation change over position, providing a display which notifies a change over of operation of said current runner character on the game screen of the player who operates a next runner character which is set as a next runner among the player characters based on the order-of-play information;

an operation change over process of, when said current runner character arrives at the operation change over position, along with displaying said next runner character at the position of said current runner character, also inhibiting operation signals from the operator of said current runner character, and making effective an operation signal from the operator of the next runner character;

a change over timing calculation process of, in said notification process, calculating timing at which operation change over is performed, based on the distance between said current runner character and said reference point; and

a change over timing display process of providing a display which shows timing of operation change over on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character, based on the change over timing information calculated by the change over timing calculation process.

14. (New) The method according to Claim 13, further comprising:

a process of, in said notification process, displaying said next runner character translucently overlapped on said current runner character which is being displayed on said game screen of the operator of said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by said change over timing calculation process, changing the transparency of the display of said current runner character and of said next runner character as the time for change over approaches, and, at the time point when the time for change over has arrived, displaying said next runner character normally along with canceling the display of said current runner character.

15. (New) The method according to Claim 13, further comprising:

a process of, in said notification process, deforming said current runner character which is being displayed on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character into said next runner character; and

a process of, based on the change over timing information which has been calculated by the change over timing calculation process, performing display so as to deform said current runner character into said next runner character as the time for change over approaches.